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Reason For Optimism Amid Gloom Outlook

For two full days this week we listened to the top officials of our government, from President Kennedy on down through the cabinet level to the heads of such organizations as the National Space Agency, Central Intelligence and the Joint Chiefs of Staff, explain the background of today's very serious world crisis.

In what might be called a fourteen-hour joint interview they went even further and gave forthright answers to hundreds of pointed questions regarding America's course in a troubled future.

And out of all these answers we have reached the following conclusions which may be of interest to our readers.

1. America has made mistakes, the No. 1 recent example being the Cuban fiasco.

2. It will make more mistakes—many more, in fact, and some of the big ones.

3. Under President Kennedy these mistakes will more frequently be mistakes of action than of inaction, as has been the case in the past.

4. For at least the next year or two while we are re-developing our art of guerilla warfare, the Communists will make further serious gains in Africa and Asia. In other words, Cuba and Laos will not be the last countries to fall to the Reds.

5. Latin America is at last awake to the Russian threat and with the exception of Cuba is safer from communism than at any time in recent years.

6. To meet the expected inroads in Asia and Africa and continued Communist efforts to infiltrate Latin America, the United States military establishment will in part be revamped to fight wars as they exist rather than training only for wars that may never come.

7. President Kennedy will not take defeat lying down and will not be satisfied until he has discovered a way not merely to stop Communist expansion but to retake some territory previously lost to the Reds.

8. If the public will go along with him, the President will substitute American brains and brawn to a considerable degree for American money in trying to win friends and influence people.

For example, instead of repeating the \$300 million dollars President Eisenhower poured into Laos in a futile effort to keep the country from the Reds, a couple of thousand American guerrilla fights may some day show up in a distant Asiatic country to do the job money failed to accomplish.

9. The Kennedy administration will do everything feasible to get other nations to go along with us in trying to stop communism's spread.

But when a showdown comes, we will act alone—and even in opposition to our neighbors—if they refuse to accept their responsibility to resist the Reds.

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10. The practice of international blackmail by which some small countries have deliberately played footsie with communism and then run to us with a threat of turning to Khrushchev unless we come through with aid in nearing the end of its rope.

A more positive approach, with aid going chiefly to countries which help themselves rather than to those which get into deepest trouble, seems to lie ahead.

1. It is not beyond the realm of possibility that the year 1961 could see the beginning of the Third World War everyone has so greatly dreaded. And the starting point if it comes will no doubt be Berlin.

12. Even if Allied forces in Europe can hold back the Russian army only two or three weeks as some contend, that will be long enough. For it will give the Reds time to decide whether they want nuclear war. And nuclear war is what Europe will see if the Russians march.

13. The stock of nuclear bombs possessed by both the Communists and the West is now so big that both sides are literally swamped and may soon cut back production if they have not already done so.

14. The real threat to the world will come when China gets the hydrogen bomb—without Russia's help. This is likely to be not earlier than 1962 nor later than 1964.

These conclusions—reasonably well justified, we believe—seem basically gloomy.

Yet we are less pessimistic than we were a year or two ago.

For we believe that for the first time in fifteen years America is going to receive a challenge under President Kennedy to admit the seriousness of our plight and do something about it through a "blood, sweat and tears" approach as well as through use of money.

At first the American people are not going to like this approach.

We have been led to believe that the war of the future will be a push button affair, conducted in relative comfort and with a minimum of sacrifice though possibly with total effectiveness.

But that isn't the type of war the Russians are fighting. Nor is it the type with which Khrushchev has sworn to wipe us off the map.

We are convinced that while we need the nuclear deterrent we now have, the wars of the immediate future will revert to the Indian fighting tactics of George Washington's days.

And it is because we believe President Kennedy is already shaking up the American military in a way which will prepare us for such guerilla warfare wherever it may occur in areas affecting our security that we are less pessimistic than the above gloomy outlook seems to indicate.

In other words, we feel that though the world crisis will almost certainly get worse before it gets better, we and our allies can meet any challenge the Reds offer if we quit expecting to escape trouble and start organizing ourselves to overcome it even though victory requires greater effort and greater sacrifice than we have been called upon to make in recent years.

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